Rec. Jan. 19, 1854
Ans. Oct. 26, 1854
C. H. M.

Wheelock C. N. Dec. 23. 1853

To the Com. on For. Missions, Princeton Theol. Sem.

Dear Brethren.

Your letter revived old associations with much strength & interest. I have never corresponded with the Soc of Inquiry, but now embrace gladly the opportunity to do what I can to give interest to your meetings, and give information which may be of any use to you, & so advance the cause of the Saviour at so important a point of influence.

The brother whose death you mention I knew well and set a very high estimate upon as a man of humble, devoted piety. God grant to you all a double portion of his spirit!

Since the last annual Report of the Presbyt. Board was made, I have have changed my location and missionary connection, being now at Wheelock, under the care of the A. B. C. F. M., as the successor of the Rev. A. Wright, a veteran laborer in this land, whom God took to himself last Spring. My connection, however, with the Presb. church remains undisturbed.

You inquire as to my mode of preaching, and as to the style of address which promises most good

among the Indians, whether calm or earnest-didactic or hortatory.

In answer to the former point, my mode has always been to preach through an interpreter. He stands by my side & gives the discourse to the people sentence by sentence, as I give it in English. There are but two white men in the nation, who have the Choctaw language sufficiently at command to use it in preaching. These are Mr. Byington & Mr. C. C. Copeland.

Now that I have time for study, I am giving much of my attention to the acquisition of the language, though not expecting to be able to use it fluently for a long time. The structure of the language is extremely different from that of any other language with which I am acquainted. It has no prepositions, but abounds in particles which sometimes have the character of articles, sometimes of conjunctions, & sometimes of both these combined, and the distinctions between these are extremely subtle. This makes it very difficult of acquisition.

As to style of preaching, this people are very much like other people in their tastes & in the effect of different styles upon them. Eloquence is as influential here as elsewhere, and solid instruction is as important for them as for others; perhaps even more so, because they have to rely more fully upon preaching for their spiritual food, and they hear it quite seldom. They had an

oratorical style as distinguished from the conversational, which is said to have been very impressive; but it is nearly obsolete now, so much so that I have never heard it. They lengthened the particles much, and had a kind of slow chanting delivery, I believe, and at the same time spoke very loud and with much animation. Now, however, a more concise style, which is better suited to giving instruction, & a manner more resembling the conversational, has almost entirely superseded it. Of course, a different style of preaching may be required now, from what would formerly have suited. Yet I am strongly of the opinion that the didactic style is & always has been very important here. It makes the most stable & the most thorough going christians. Mr. Wright's labors were very greatly blessed, more so, perhaps, than those of any other in this field; yet, for more than 20 years before his death, he had a disease of the heart which made it necessary to guard carefully against all excitement and extra effort; but his preaching was very instructive.

I suppose the opinion expressed in your letter, that our labors have more resemblance to those of the home missionary in the destitute parts of the

country, than to those of the missionaries in India, Africa & China, is true.

Not being acquainted with the country east of the Mississippi ~~east of~~ in this latitude, I cannot compare the climate & diseases of this country with those of that. We have extremely hot summers, rather mild winters, though we feel the cold fully as much as we used to at the North, and the weather is very liable to sudden changes, which are quite trying to the constitution. Ague prevails to a considerable extent, though not nearly as much, I judge, as in the north western states. Also pneumonia, especially among the natives.

Sometimes will elapse, I think, before the Choctaws will be able to support their own ministry, and take the position now occupied by the S. Islands churches; ~~but the~~ how long, I cannot tell; but the gospel is very widely spread among them.

With hearty thanks to God that I ever enjoyed the privileges which you now have, and with the earnest prayer that he may give you all the grace needed for your work, ~~I bid~~ I must close.

Yours in christian fellowship

John Edwards